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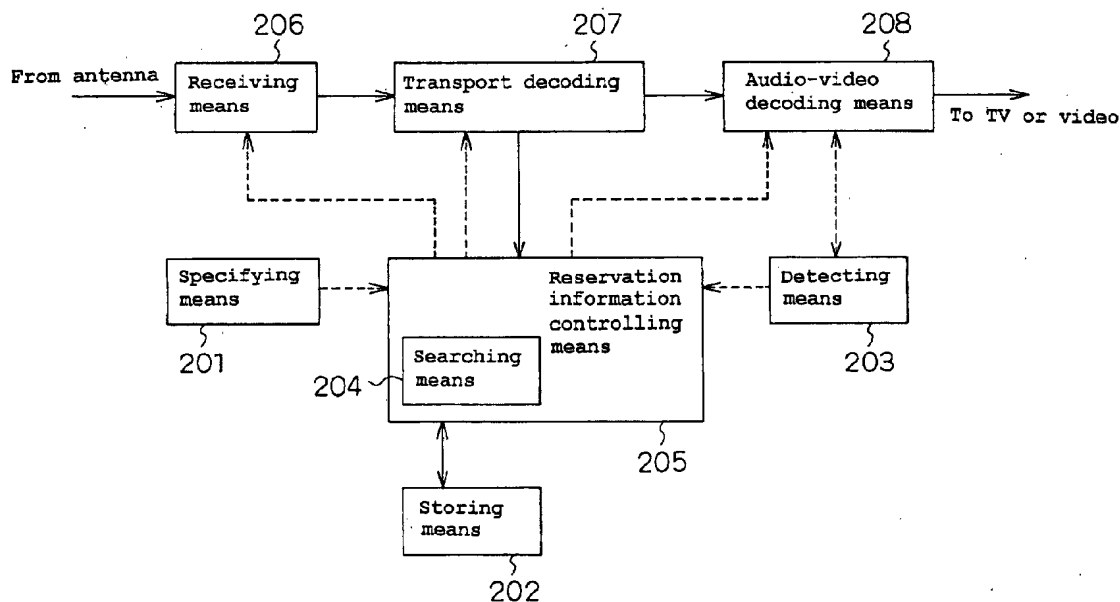
(54) **BROADCAST PROGRAM RECORDING PROGRAMMING DEVICE AND METHOD**

(57) In case of the occurrence of reception failure due to rain and the like during the broadcast of a reserved program, all or part of the reserved program is not successfully received.

Provided is detecting means 203 of detecting the

occurrence of reception failure, thereby a program which has the same title as that of the presently received program and is to be broadcast later than the presently received program is searched from a program information, then the program is automatically reserved.

Fig. 2



Description

TECHNICAL FIELD

[0001] The present invention relates to a program reserving apparatus, method, and program for reserving a broadcast program.

BACKGROUND ART

[0002] In television broadcasting, available is a service for providing the title and the time of day of each scheduled program. Further, available is a receiving apparatus for receiving the information distributed by the service and thereby displaying an electronic program table (an example of the table is shown in Figure 1) in a form similar to that in newspapers. In such a receiving apparatus, a cursor can be moved on the electronic program table on the screen by means of a remote controller, thereby a desired program can be reserved. When the scheduled time of the reserved program comes, the reserved program is automatically received and output to a television receiver, a video deck, and the like. Some apparatuses have a function of linking and starting the video deck, and the like, at the scheduled time of the reserved program.

[0003] Nevertheless, in some cases, reception failure can occur due to a rain and the like during the broadcast of the reserved program. This causes the trouble that all or part of the reserved program is not successfully received. If such failure occurs when the reserved program is being recorded, the situation that the reserved program has not been successfully recorded cannot be recognized until the recorded tape is reproduced later.

[0004] That is, there has been the problem in that in case of recording a reserved program the situation that the reserved program has not been successfully recorded cannot be recognized even if reception failure has occurred during the broadcast of the reserved program until the recorded tape is reproduced later.

DISCLOSURE OF INVENTION

[0005] In a broadcasting system such as digital broadcasting capable of providing a large number of channels, a certain kind of channel provides the same program or similar programs repeatedly. In this case, if the situation that reception failure has occurred during the reception of the reserved program was recognized, the same or a similar program broadcast later can be received and recorded.

[0006] With considering the above-mentioned problem, an object of the invention is to provide a program reserving apparatus, method, and program in which when reception failure has occurred during the reception of a reserved program, the occurrence of the reception failure is detected, thereby the same or a similar program is found out and reserved in the electronic pro-

gram table, and thereby the program having suffered the reception failure is received again automatically.

[0007] To solve the above problem, a 1st invention of the present invention (corresponding to Claim 1) is a program reserving apparatus comprising:

specifying means of specifying a program to be reserved and thereby reserving said program;
detecting means of detecting reception failure during the reception of said reserved program;
searching means of searching for a program from among program information containing at least information on the channel and the broadcast time and day of broadcast programs; and
reservation information controlling means in which when said detecting means has detected reception failure during the reception of said reserved program, said reservation information controlling means controls said searching means to search for the same or a similar program corresponding to said reserved program among said program information, and in which when the result of said search shows the presence of the same or a similar program corresponding to said reserved program, said reservation information controlling means reserves said same or similar program automatically.

[0008] A 2nd invention of the present invention (corresponding to Claim 2) is a program reserving apparatus according to the 1st invention further comprising linkage controlling means of causing an external recording apparatus to operate in linkage on the basis of program reservation information containing at least information on the channel and the broadcast time and day of said reserved program, wherein

the operation of reserving said program indicates the operation of registering said program reservation information.

[0009] A 3rd invention of the present invention (corresponding to Claim 3) is a program reserving apparatus according to the 2nd invention, wherein when said detecting means has detected reception failure during the reception of said reserved program, and when the result of said search by said searching means shows the presence of the same or a similar program corresponding to said reserved program, said linkage controlling means controls said recording apparatus to record said program having suffered the reception failure as far as the capacity of said recording apparatus permits.

[0010] A 4th invention of the present invention (corresponding to Claim 4) is a program reserving apparatus according to the 3rd invention, wherein when said recording apparatus has completed the recording of said same or similar program without reception failure detected by said detecting means during the reception of said same or similar program, said linkage controlling means controls said recording apparatus to delete said program having suffered the reception failure.

[0011] A 5th invention of the present invention (corresponding to Claim 5) is a program reserving apparatus according to the 3rd invention, wherein when said detecting means has detected reception failure during the reception of said same or similar program, and when the result of said search by said searching means shows the absence of the same or a similar program corresponding to said program having suffered the reception failure, said recording apparatus is controlled to record said program having suffered the reception failure as far as the capacity of said recording apparatus permits, and wherein

said recording apparatus is controlled to delete programs other than one program having suffered the least reception failure among the same programs having suffered reception failure and recorded in said recording apparatus.

[0012] A 6th invention of the present invention (corresponding to Claim 6) is a program reserving method comprising:

in case of the occurrence of reception failure during the reception of a reserved program, the step of searching for the same or a similar program corresponding to said reserved program among program information containing at least information on the channel and the broadcast time and day of broadcast programs; and

when the result of said search shows the presence of the same or a similar program corresponding to said reserved program, the step of reserving said same or similar program automatically.

[0013] A 7th invention of the present invention (corresponding to Claim 7) is a program reserving apparatus according to the 6th invention further comprising the step of causing an external recording apparatus to operate in linkage on the basis of program reservation information containing at least information on the channel and the broadcast time and day of said reserved program, wherein

the operation of reserving said program indicates the operation of registering said program reservation information.

[0014] An 8th invention of the present invention (corresponding to Claim 8) is a program causing a computer to execute all or part of:

in case of the occurrence of reception failure during the reception of a reserved program, the step of searching for the same or a similar program corresponding to said reserved program among program information containing at least information on the channel and the broadcast time and day of broadcast programs; and

when the result of said search shows the presence of the same or a similar program corresponding to said reserved program, the step of reserving said same or similar program automatically;

in the program reserving method according to the 6th invention.

[0015] A 9th invention of the present invention (corresponding to Claim 9) is a program causing a computer

to execute all or part of the step of causing an external recording apparatus to operate in linkage on the basis of program reservation information containing at least information on the channel and the broadcast time and day of said reserved program, in the program reserving method according to the 7th invention.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0016]

Figure 1 shows an example of an electronic program table.

Figure 2 shows an example of the configuration of a program reserving apparatus according to Embodiments 1 and 3 of the invention.

Figure 3 shows an example of the key configuration in specifying means of a program reserving apparatus according to Embodiments 1-4 of the invention.

Figure 4 shows an example of program information according to Embodiments 1-4 of the invention.

Figure 5 shows an example of program information according to Embodiments 1-4 of the invention.

Figure 6 shows an example of the configuration of a program reserving apparatus according to Embodiments 2 and 4 of the invention.

Figure 7 is a flowchart showing the procedure in a program reserving method according to Embodiments 3 and 4 of the invention.

[Description of the Reference Numerals]

[0017]

201	Specifying means
202	Storing means
203	Detecting means
204	Searching means
205	Reservation information controlling means
206	Receiving means
207	Transport decoding means
208	Audio-video decoding means
601	Specifying means
602	Storing means
603	Detecting means
604	Searching means
605	Reservation information controlling means
606	Receiving means
607	Transport decoding means
608	Audio-video decoding means
609	Linkage controlling means

BEST MODE FOR CARRYING OUT THE INVENTION

[0018] Figure 2 shows an example of the configuration of a program reserving apparatus and method according to the present embodiment of the invention. The

program reserving apparatus comprises: specifying means 201 of specifying a program to be reserved; storing means 202 of storing the program reservation information of the specified program; reception failure detecting means 203 of detecting reception failure during the reception of the reserved program; searching means 204 of searching program information for a program, using the title of the program as a search key; and reservation information controlling means 205 of controlling the program reservation information.

[0019] Numeral 206 indicates receiving means of demodulating a signal input from an antenna and converting the signal into a transport stream in MPEG-2. The transport stream is assumed to include program information composed of the scheduled time and the titles of the broadcast programs, in addition to the audio-video data. That is, necessary information, such as the scheduled time and the titles of the broadcast programs, is extracted from an EPG (electronic program guide) attached to the transport stream by a broadcast station, and thereby such program information can be obtained.

[0020] Numeral 207 indicates transport decoding means of extracting necessary information from the transport stream. Numeral 208 indicates audio-video decoding means of decoding the audio-video data of a program, and of generating the screen image of an electronic program table.

[0021] The specifying means 201 is composed of a remote control unit or an operation panel provided in the main body of the apparatus, and comprises keys for cursor movement and determination. The output of the audio-video decoding means 208 is connected to a television receiver or a video deck. A user watches the electronic program table (an example of the table is shown in Figure 1) displayed on the television screen, and thereby reserves a desired program using the specifying means 201.

[0022] The receiving means 206 detects and demodulates the RF signal input from the antenna. After carrying out error correction, the receiving means 206 converts the signal into a transport stream, and then provides the transport stream to the transport decoding means 207.

[0023] The transport decoding means 207 extracts the the program information and audio-video data which are necessary for the reproduction of the program, from the transport stream outputted from the receiving means 206, provides the audio-video data to the audio-video decoding means 208, and provides the program information to the storing means 202.

[0024] The audio-video decoding means 208 has some functions; one is to decode the audio-video data provided from the transport decoding means 207, generate and output an audio-video signal acceptable by the television receiver, the video deck, and the like. Other function is to generate and output a video signal from the information on the screen of the electronic program table provided from the reservation information control-

ling means 205. And another function is, in case of the audio-video data from the transport decoding means 207 is interrupted, or the decoding is failed owing to an error contained in the audio-video data causing to disturb the audio-video output, to notify the occurrence of the disturbance to the outside.

[0025] The reception failure detecting means 203 monitors the audio-video decoding means 208. Thus, when the decoding of the audio-video data is failed in the audio-video decoding means 208, the reception failure detecting means 203 notifies the occurrence of the failure to the reservation information controlling means 205.

[0026] The reservation information controlling means 205 receives the program information provided from the transport decoding means 207, and then stores the information into the storing means 202. And, the reservation information controlling means 205 has a function that generates the screen image data of an electronic program table as shown in Figure 1 receiving the input from the specifying means 201 and reading out the program information stored in the storing means 202, and then provides the data to the audio-video decoding means 208 to display the electronic program table on the screen. Furthermore, the reservation information controlling means 205 has another function that instructs the receiving means 206, the transport decoding means 207, and the audio-video decoding means 208 to receive the program the user has reserved on the basis of the program reservation information included in the program information. The reservation information controlling means 205 comprises, in the inside, searching means 204 of searching the program information stored in the storing means 202, using the title of a program as a search key.

[0027] The storing means 202 is composed of a memory such as a DRAM, and thereby stores the program information provided from the reservation information controlling means 205.

(Embodiment 1)

[0028] An embodiment of a program reserving apparatus according to Claim 1 of the invention is described below with reference to Figure 2. Numeral 201 indicates specifying means that comprises at least certain keys, such as cursor movement keys and a determination key shown in Figure 3, necessary for selecting a desired program in the electronic program table. Alternatively, the cursor movement keys and the determination key may be provided in a remote control unit or in the panel in the main body of the receiver.

[0029] Numeral 203 indicates detecting means of detecting the occurrence of failure in audio-video decoding means 208 during the reception. The detecting means 203 monitors a signal that will indicate the occurrence of failure in the decoding of the audio-video data in the audio-video decoding means 208, continuously during

the reception of the reserved program. When detecting the occurrence of failure, the detecting means 203 notifies the occurrence to the reservation information controlling means 205.

[0030] Numeral 202 indicates storing means of storing program information. The storing means 202 is composed of a memory such as a DRAM, and thereby stores the program information for a certain time such as a week. As shown in Figure 4, the program information includes at least a channel number, broadcast start time, program title, and reservation status information. As described above, the program information is generated by extracting necessary information from the EPG (electronic program guide) that is attached to the transport stream and then broadcast together with the program by a broadcast station.

[0031] Numeral 205 indicates reservation information controlling means and has a function that stores the program information provided from the transport decoding means 207 into the storing means 202. Further, the reservation information controlling means 205 has another function that instructs the receiving means 206, the transport decoding means 207, and the audio-video decoding means 208 to receive and output the channel of the reserved program when the broadcast start time of the reserved program comes, referring to the reservation status information, the broadcast start time, and the channel number included in the program information stored in the storing means 202.

[0032] Further, the reservation information controlling means 205 comprises searching means 204, which has a function to search for a program from the program information stored in the storing means 202 using the title of the program as a search key. The searching means 204 is invoked by the reservation information controlling means 205, when the detecting means 203 has detected reception failure during the reception of the reserved program. When invoked, the searching means 204 searches for a program having the same title as that of the presently received program, from among the programs to be broadcast later than the presently received program. When a program having the same title is found out, the reservation information controlling means 205 operates the reservation status information of the program founded in the storing means 202, and thereby reserves the program.

[0033] In this configuration, for example, in the case that the storing means 202 stores the program information shown in Figure 4, when the time 9:30 comes, the reservation information controlling means 205 instructs the receiving means 206, the transport decoding means 207, and the audio-video decoding means 208 so that a reserved program B is received and output to a television receiver or the like, and the reception of the reserved program begins. Once the reception of the program B begins, the detecting means 203 starts to monitor the audio-video decoding means 208, and thereby waits for the occurrence of failure during the decoding

of the audio-video data in the audio-video decoding means 208.

[0034] Methods of detecting the occurrence of failure include a method based on an interrupt from the audio-video decoding means 208, and a method based on a change in the value of a register indicating the status of the audio-video decoding means 208.

[0035] Here, in the method based on an interrupt, the audio-video decoding means 208 notifies the occurrence of failure in dealing with the audio-video decoding to the detecting means 203 by means of an interrupt. On the other hand, in the method based on a change in the value of the register, the detecting means 203 monitors the value of the register indicating the status of the audio-video decoding means 208, and thereby detects the occurrence of an error during the decoding.

[0036] When the detecting means 203 detects the occurrence of failure during the decoding of the audio-video data, the detection result is notified to the reservation information controlling means 205. Then, the reservation information controlling means 205 invokes the searching means 204. The searching means 204 refers to the program information stored in the storing means 202, and thereby searches for a program having the same title (program B, in this example) as that of the presently received program, from among the programs to be broadcast on the same channel as that of the presently received program and in a timing later than that of the presently received program.

[0037] As a result of the search, when a program having the same title is found out (program B to be broadcast at 13:30, in this example), the reservation information controlling means 205 sets the reservation status information of the found program, and thereby reserves the program. According to this operation, the program information is changed into that shown in Figure 5, thereby the reception of the program B begins at 13:30. As such, in case of the occurrence of failure during the reception of a reserved program, when the same program is broadcast again, the program can be automatically re-received.

[0038] The operation of setting the reservation status information and thereby carrying out reservation according to the present embodiment is an example of the operation of registering the above-described program reservation information according to the invention. The operation of reserving a program according to the present embodiment is an example of the operation of reserving a program according to the invention. The program reservation information according to the present embodiment is an example of the program reservation information according to the invention.

[0039] Further, the operation of reserving a program according to the invention is not restricted to the operation of reserving a program for reception according to the present embodiment, and may be the operation of reserving a program for recording.

(Embodiment 2)

[0040] An embodiment of a program reserving apparatus according to Claim 2 of the invention is described below with reference to Figure 6. The program reserving apparatus according to Claim 2 is a program reserving apparatus according to Claim 1 further comprising linkage controlling means 609. The operation of the specifying means 601, the storing means 602, the detecting means 603, and the searching means 604 is the same as that in Embodiment 1. In addition to the operation in Embodiment 1, the reservation information controlling means 605 instructs the linkage controlling means 609 to start recording at the start of reception of the reserved program. In response to the instruction, the linkage controlling means 609 causes a recording apparatus, such as a video deck connected thereto, to begin to record the program. On completion of the broadcast of the reserved program, the linkage controlling means 609 causes the recording apparatus to terminate the recording operation.

[0041] As such, in case of the occurrence of failure during the reception of a reserved program, when the same program is broadcast again, the program can be automatically re-received and re-recorded.

(Embodiment 3)

[0042] A program reception reserving method according to Claim 3 of the invention is described below with reference to a configuration diagram of Figure 2 and a flowchart of Figure 7. For example, in case that the storing means 202 stores the program information shown in Figure 4, the procedure waits for the broadcast start time 9:30 of the reserved program (S701). When the broadcast start time 9:30 of the reserved program comes, an instruction is issued to the receiving means 206, the transport decoding means 207, and the audio-video decoding means 208, whereby the reserved program is received (S702). Then, the audio-video decoding means 208 is monitored, whereby the occurrence of failure is checked (S703). When the occurrence of any failure is detected, the reservation information controlling means 205 refers to the program information stored in the storing means 202 (S706), and thereby obtains the title of the program next to the presently received program (S707). As a result of comparing the title of the next program with the title of the presently received program (S708), when the two titles are the same, the reservation information controlling means 205 operates the reservation status information of the program, and thereby reserves the program (S710). When the two titles are different from each other, the title of every subsequent program is compared sequentially up to the last one stored in the storing means 202 in order to find out a program having the same title (S709, S707, S708). In case that the occurrence of failure is detected, the procedure waits for the broadcast end time of the program

(S711). In contrast, in case that the occurrence of failure is not yet detected, the occurrence of failure is continuously monitored until the broadcast end time of the program (S704, S703). At the broadcast end time of the program, the reception is terminated (S705). Then, the procedure waits for the broadcast start time of the next reserved program (S701). The procedure repeats these steps. As such, in case of the occurrence of failure during the reception of a reserved program, when the same program is broadcast again, the program can be automatically re-received.

(Embodiment 4)

[0043] A program recording reserving method according to Claim 4 of the invention is a program reception reserving method according to Claim 3 further comprising the operation of linkage of a recording apparatus such as a video deck. That is, the step of causing the recording apparatus such as a video deck to begin to record the program is added to the reception start step (S702) in Figure 7. Further, the step of causing the recording apparatus to terminate the recording operation is added to the reception termination step (S705). As such, in case of the occurrence of failure during the reception of a reserved program, when the same program is broadcast again, the program can be automatically re-received and re-recorded.

(Embodiment 5)

[0044] A recording medium according to the present embodiment is composed of a recording medium, such as a magnetic medium, an optical medium, a magneto-optical medium, and a semiconductor device, which carries a computer readable program for causing a computer to execute the program reserving method according to Claim 3.

(Embodiment 6)

[0045] A recording medium according to the present embodiment is composed of a recording medium, such as a magnetic medium, an optical medium, a magneto-optical medium, and a semiconductor device, which carries a computer readable program for causing a computer to execute the program reserving method according to Claim 4.

[0046] The above-mentioned embodiments have been described for the case that the program information is generated by extracting necessary information from an EPG (electronic program guide) attached to the transport stream provided from a broadcast station. However, the invention is not restricted to this. In place of the EPG (electronic program guide) attached to the transport stream provided from a broadcast station, an EPG (electronic program guide) distributed through the Internet may be used.

Alternatively, an EPG (electronic program guide) recorded on a transportable medium such as a CD-ROM for distribution may be used. Further, instead of extracting necessary information for the program information from such an EPG (electronic program guide), the EPG (electronic program guide) itself may be used as the program information.

[0047] The above-mentioned embodiments have been described for the case that when the detecting means 203 has detected the occurrence of failure during the decoding of the audio-video data, a program having the same title as that of the presently received program is searched for from among the programs to be broadcast on the same channel as that of the presently received program and in a timing later than that of the presently received program. However, the invention is not restricted to this. That is, when the detecting means 203 has detected the occurrence of failure during the decoding of the audio-video data, a program having the same title as that of the presently received program may be searched for from among the programs to be broadcast on a channel different from that of the presently received program and in a timing later than that of the presently received program. For example, it becomes effective to search for another channel than the channel which is receiving with a service called NVOD (near video on demand), that is, a service that broadcasts one program on several channels at different time for each by staggering its start time, for example, by 30 minutes so that it becomes possible to watch the program any-time from the beginning.

[0048] The above-mentioned embodiments have been described for the case that when the occurrence of failure is detected, the procedure waits for the broadcast end time of the program (S711). However, the invention is not restricted to this. For example, in case of a program in the NVOD service, reception may be terminated at the time when the occurrence of failure is detected, despite that the broadcast of the program still continues. Then, the same program to be broadcast on a different channel may be received.

[0049] In case of the occurrence of failure during the reception of a reserved program as described in Embodiments 1 and 3, when the same program as that having suffered the failure is to be automatically re-recorded, the linkage controlling means 609 makes it possible to record the same program deleting or after deleted the part of the program having suffered the failure from the recording medium of the recording apparatus. That is, in place of the control such that the second program is recorded in the recording area following that of the first program having suffered the failure, the linkage controlling means 609 may control such that the part of the first program having suffered the failure is deleted and then the second program is recorded in the recording area where the first program having suffered the failure had been recorded, or alternatively such that the second program is overwritten on the first program having suf-

fered the failure. Such an approach permits efficient use of the recording medium that records a program of the recording apparatus.

[0050] The recording apparatus according to the present embodiments may be composed of an apparatus recording on a tape medium such as D-VHS, VCR, and the like, that is, a recording apparatus for accessing sequentially.

Alternatively, the recording apparatus may be composed of an apparatus recording on a disk such as a hard disk apparatus and an optical disk apparatus, that is, a recording apparatus capable of accessing randomly a disk medium. The operation that the second program is overwritten on the first program is used in the sequential access recording apparatus. In contrast, the operation that the position of the first program is deleted and then the second program is recorded in the recording area where the first program had been recorded is used in the random access recording apparatus.

[0051] In case of the occurrence of failure during the reception of a reserved program as described in Embodiments 1 and 3, when the same program as that having suffered the failure is thereby to be automatically re-recorded, the linkage controlling means 609 may control such that the program having suffered the failure is also recorded in the recording apparatus as far as the capacity of the recording apparatus permits. According to this control, in spite of the reception failure in a part of the desired program, the linkage controlling means 609 controls the recording apparatus to record the program having suffered the failure as far as the capacity permits. Accordingly, when the program is re-produced by the recording apparatus, the program can be watched normally except for the part of the reception failure. This approach ensures the user to watch at least the part of the program received successfully, and thereby is useful in case of a program that the user never wants to miss.

[0052] In such a case, when a second program corresponding to the first program having suffered the failure is automatically reserved and, without the occurrence of failure being detected while the second program automatically reserved has been received, the second program has been recorded on the recording apparatus, the linkage controlling means 609 may control the recording apparatus to delete the first program that corresponds to the second program automatically reserved and has suffered the failure after recording the second program automatically reserved on the recording apparatus. As such, when the recording of the second program has been completed in the recording apparatus without the occurrence of failure, the first program having suffered the failure is unnecessary. Thus, deletion of the first program having suffered the failure permits efficient use of the recording medium of the recording apparatus.

[0053] When a second program corresponding to the first program having suffered the failure is automatically reserved, and when the occurrence of failure is detected

during the reception of the second reserved program, and further when the searching means 204 or 604 shows that no other program exists corresponding to the second reserved program, the linkage controlling means 609 may control the recording apparatus to record also the second reserved program as far as the capacity of the recording apparatus permits. After that, the linkage controlling means 609 may control the recording apparatus to keep one program having suffered the least failure and then delete the other program(s). According to this approach, when the occurrence of failure is detected during the reception of a reserved program, and when the occurrence of failure is detected during the reception of all subsequently reserved programs, and even when no other program exists corresponding to the reserved program, the linkage controlling means 609 controls the recording apparatus to keep one program having suffered the least failure and then delete the other program(s). This permits efficient use of the recording medium of the recording apparatus, and at the same time, ensures the user to watch the program having suffered the least failure.

[0054] The program reserving apparatus according to the present embodiments may serve as a television receiver for receiving broadcast waves, such as satellite broadcasting, ground wave broadcasting, and CATV broadcasting, and thereby outputting the video and the voice through a monitor and a speaker, respectively. Further, the program reserving apparatus may serve as a recording apparatus of D-VHS and VCR, or alternatively as a personal computer with television tuner. The program reserving apparatus may be integrated in a one-piece unit, or alternatively composed of a plurality of component units.

[0055] The program reserving apparatus according to the present embodiments has been described for the case that the program and the EPG are broadcast and received in MPEG-2 transport stream. However, the invention is not restricted to this. The program reserving apparatus may be applied to digital broadcasting of another scheme. For example, the program reserving apparatus may be used in the reservation of a program in analog broadcasting. In case of analog broadcasting, the above-mentioned EPG (electronic program guide) is generally provided during the vertical blanking interval of the analog broadcast. In case that no EPG (electronic program guide) is provided during the vertical blanking interval, an EPG (electronic program guide) distributed through the Internet may be used.

Alternatively, an EPG (electronic program guide) recorded on a transportable medium for distribution such as a CD-ROM may be used. In case of analog broadcasting, the occurrence of reception failure may be detected as a decrease in the reception level from the antenna.

[0056] The same or a similar program corresponding to a reserved program according to the invention indicates a program which has the same title as that of the

reserved program and is broadcast in a timing later than that of the reserved program. That is, the same or a similar program is not restricted to a program that has the same title and the same contents.

[0057] The same or a similar program corresponding to a reserved program according to the invention may be a program that has the same title as that of the reserved program but has slightly different contents from that of the reserved program. That is, the same or a similar program may be a program similar to the reserved program.

[0058] This situation is described below with reference to an example of a relay broadcast of a baseball game. For example, on channel 200, a baseball game between baseball teams the Giants and the Tigers is relayed in live from 13:00 to 15:00 under the title "Relay of baseball game - Giants vs Tigers." On channel 220, the same baseball game is relayed in record from 19:00 to 21:00 under the title "Relay of baseball game - Giants vs Tigers." The announcer and the commentator in the relay on channel 200 are different from those on channel 220. In this case, in the program on channel 200 and the program on channel 220, the program titles are identical, and the baseball game relayed is the same. However, the announcer and the commentator in the relay are different in these channels. Accordingly, the program on channel 200 and the program on channel 220 are not completely the same but similar to each other. In this case, when the program on channel 200 was reserved and has suffered reception failure during the reception, the program on channel 220 may be automatically reserved as the second program as described above.

[0059] Described below is another example of a similar program corresponding to a reserved program. On channel 240, a movie program having the title "the Titanic" is broadcast from 17:00 to 19:30. Further, on channel 260, a movie program having the title "the Titanic" is broadcast from 20:00 to 22:30. Each program is the television version of a theater movie "the Titanic." However, on channel 240, the voice is English, and superposition is provided in Japanese. In contrast, on channel 260, the voice is dubbed into Japanese. That is, although these two programs are the same movie "the Titanic," the voice on channel 240 is English, while the voice on channel 260 is Japanese. That is, the program on channel 240 and the program on channel 260 are not completely the same but similar to each other. In this case, when the program on channel 240 was reserved and has suffered reception failure during the reception, the program on channel 260 may be automatically reserved as the second program as described above. Thus, as seen from these two examples, two programs that the contents of which is partially different from each other may be considered as the same or similar programs.

[0060] Described below is further another example of a similar program corresponding to a reserved program.

On channel 200, a program is broadcast. On channel 220, the same program is broadcast but together with commentary in finger language. In this case, when the program on channel 200 is the reserved program, the program on channel 220 is a similar program corresponding to the reserved program. As such, a program that has extra information, such as commentary in finger language, added to the original reserved program and is broadcast in another timing may be considered as a similar program corresponding to the original reserved program without extra information.

[0061] In short, the same or a similar program corresponding to a reserved program according to the invention may be the same program as the reserved program, or alternatively a similar program that has slightly different contents from that of the reserved program. That is, the scope of similarity herein includes the situation that the majority of the contents of programs is the same but that the entirety is not completely the same, and the situation that the contents of a program is composed of the contents of another program and additional information.

[0062] The above-mentioned embodiments of the invention have been described for the case that the same program as the reserved program is searched for using the title as a search key. However, the invention is not restricted to this. In place of using the title, a program having the same or similar detailed description of program included in the above-mentioned EPG may be selected. Here, the situation that the detailed description is the same indicates that the text data in the detailed description is the same. The situation that the detailed description is similar indicates the following situation. That is, a large number of search keys are defined in advance. In the search for the same or a similar program corresponding to the reserved program, the text data in the detailed description is divided into words. Then, when the search keys appearing in the set of the divided words are the same as those of the reserved program, the program under consideration is determined as the same or a similar program. As such, the same or a similar program corresponding to a reserved program according to the invention may be a program having the same or similar detailed description of program included in the EPG.

[0063] The above-mentioned embodiments of the invention have been described for the case that a program is reserved using an electronic program table shown in Figure 1. However, the invention is not restricted to this. The user may reserve a program using a program table in newspapers and magazines, or alternatively using another information such as a G-code capable of specifying a program.

[0064] The invention is a program that causes a computer to execute the operation of all or part of the steps (or processes, operations, effects, and the like) in the program reserving method according to the invention, and works in cooperation with the computer.

[0065] Part of the steps (or processes, operations, effects, and the like) according to the invention indicates: a step or steps among a plurality of said steps; or alternatively, part of operation in a step.

[0066] The scope of the invention includes also a computer-readable recording medium in which a program according to the invention is recorded.

[0067] A mode of use of a program according to the invention may be that the program is recorded in a computer-readable recording medium and works in cooperation with a computer.

[0068] A mode of use of a program according to the invention may be that the program is transmitted through a transmitting medium, read out by a computer, and works in cooperation with the computer.

[0069] The scope of recording media according to the invention includes a ROM and the like, while the scope of transmitting media according to the invention includes a transmitting medium such as the Internet, as well as light, radio waves, acoustic waves, and the like.

[0070] A computer according to the invention is not restricted to genuine hardware such as a CPU, and may be firmware, an OS, and a peripheral device.

[0071] A configuration according to the invention may be implemented by software or hardware.

INDUSTRIAL APPLICABILITY

[0072] As described above, the invention provides a program reserving apparatus, method, and program in which in case of the occurrence of failure during the reception of a reserved program, re-broadcasting of the same program is searched for and reserved, thereby the program is automatically re-received for watching or recording without the necessity of manual operation. This reduces the occasions of missing a program and failing in recording caused by reception failure due to rains and the like.

Claims

1. A program reserving apparatus comprising:

specifying means of specifying a program to be reserved and thereby reserving said program; detecting means of detecting reception failure during the reception of said reserved program; searching means of searching for a program from among program information containing at least information on the channel and the broadcast time and day of broadcast programs; and reservation information controlling means in which when said detecting means has detected reception failure during the reception of said reserved program, said reservation information controlling means controls said searching means to search for the same or a similar pro-

gram corresponding to said reserved program among said program information, and in which when the result of said search shows the presence of the same or a similar program corresponding to said reserved program, said reservation information controlling means reserves said same or similar program automatically.

2. A program reserving apparatus according to Claim 1 further comprising linkage controlling means of causing an external recording apparatus to operate in linkage on the basis of program reservation information containing at least information on the channel and the broadcast time and day of said reserved program, wherein
the operation of reserving said program indicates the operation of registering said program reservation information.
3. A program reserving apparatus according to Claim 2, wherein when said detecting means has detected reception failure during the reception of said reserved program, and when the result of said search by said searching means shows the presence of the same or a similar program corresponding to said reserved program, said linkage controlling means controls said recording apparatus to record said program having suffered the reception failure as far as the capacity of said recording apparatus permits.
4. A program reserving apparatus according to Claim 3, wherein when said recording apparatus has completed the recording of said same or similar program without reception failure detected by said detecting means during the reception of said same or similar program, said linkage controlling means controls said recording apparatus to delete said program having suffered the reception failure.
5. A program reserving apparatus according to Claim 3, wherein when said detecting means has detected reception failure during the reception of said same or similar program, and when the result of said search by said searching means shows the absence of the same or a similar program corresponding to said program having suffered the reception failure, said recording apparatus is controlled to record said program having suffered the reception failure as far as the capacity of said recording apparatus permits, and wherein
said recording apparatus is controlled to delete programs other than one program having suffered the least reception failure among the same programs having suffered reception failure and recorded in said recording apparatus.

6. A program reserving method comprising:

in case of the occurrence of reception failure during the reception of a reserved program, the step of searching for the same or a similar program corresponding to said reserved program among program information containing at least information on the channel and the broadcast time and day of broadcast programs; and when the result of said search shows the presence of the same or a similar program corresponding to said reserved program, the step of reserving said same or similar program automatically.

7. A program reserving apparatus according to Claim 6 further comprising the step of causing an external recording apparatus to operate in linkage on the basis of program reservation information containing at least information on the channel and the broadcast time and day of said reserved program, wherein
the operation of reserving said program indicates the operation of registering said program reservation information.
8. A program causing a computer to execute all or part of:

in case of the occurrence of reception failure during the reception of a reserved program, the step of searching for the same or a similar program corresponding to said reserved program among program information containing at least information on the channel and the broadcast time and day of broadcast programs; and when the result of said search shows the presence of the same or a similar program corresponding to said reserved program, the step of reserving said same or similar program automatically;
in the program reserving method according to Claim 6.
9. A program causing a computer to execute all or part of the step of causing an external recording apparatus to operate in linkage on the basis of program reservation information containing at least information on the channel and the broadcast time and day of said reserved program, in the program reserving method according to Claim 7.

Fig. 1

	269ch	270ch	271ch
9:00	9:00 Program 1	9:00 Program A	9:00 Program ○
		9:30 Program B	
10:00	10:00 Program 2	10:00 Program C	
11:00	11:00 Program 3		
12:00	12:00 Program 4	12:00 Program D	12:00 Program △
13:00		13:00 Program E	13:00 Program ☆
		13:30 Program B	
14:00	14:00 Program 5	14:00 Program F	

Fig. 2

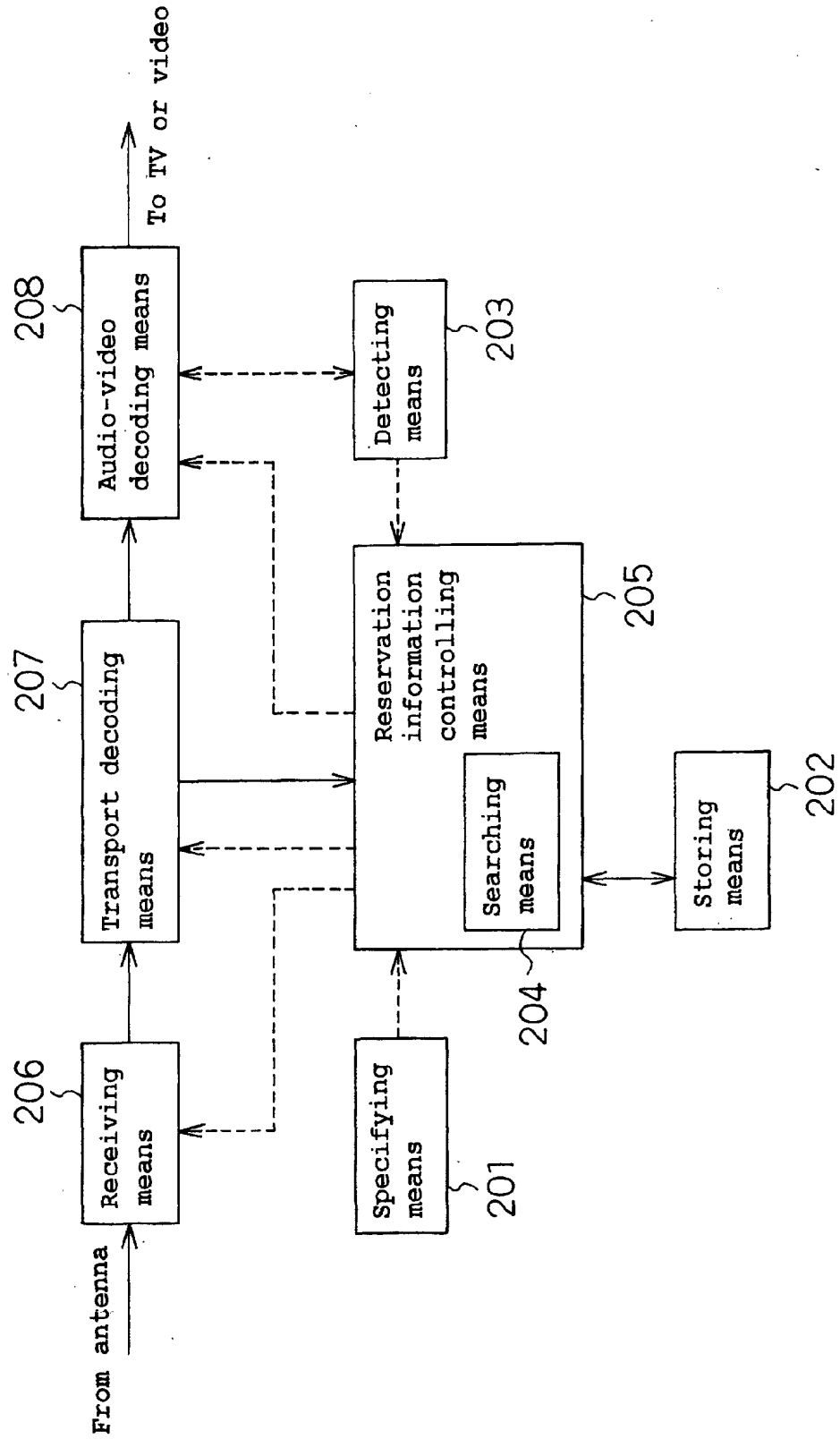


Fig. 3

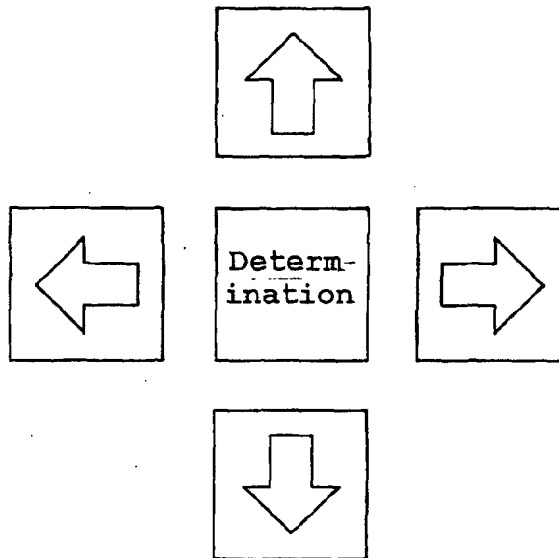


Fig. 4

270ch			
Broadcast start time	Title	Reserv- ation	. . .
9:00	Program A		
9:30	Program B	○	
10:00	Program C		
12:00	Program D		
13:00	Program E		
13:30	Program B		
14:00	Program A		
.		

Fig. 5

270ch			
Broadcast start time	Title	Reserv- ation	. . .
9:00	Program A		
9:30	Program B	○	
10:00	Program C		
12:00	Program D		
13:00	Program E		
13:30	Program B	○	
14:00	Program A		
.		

Fig. 6

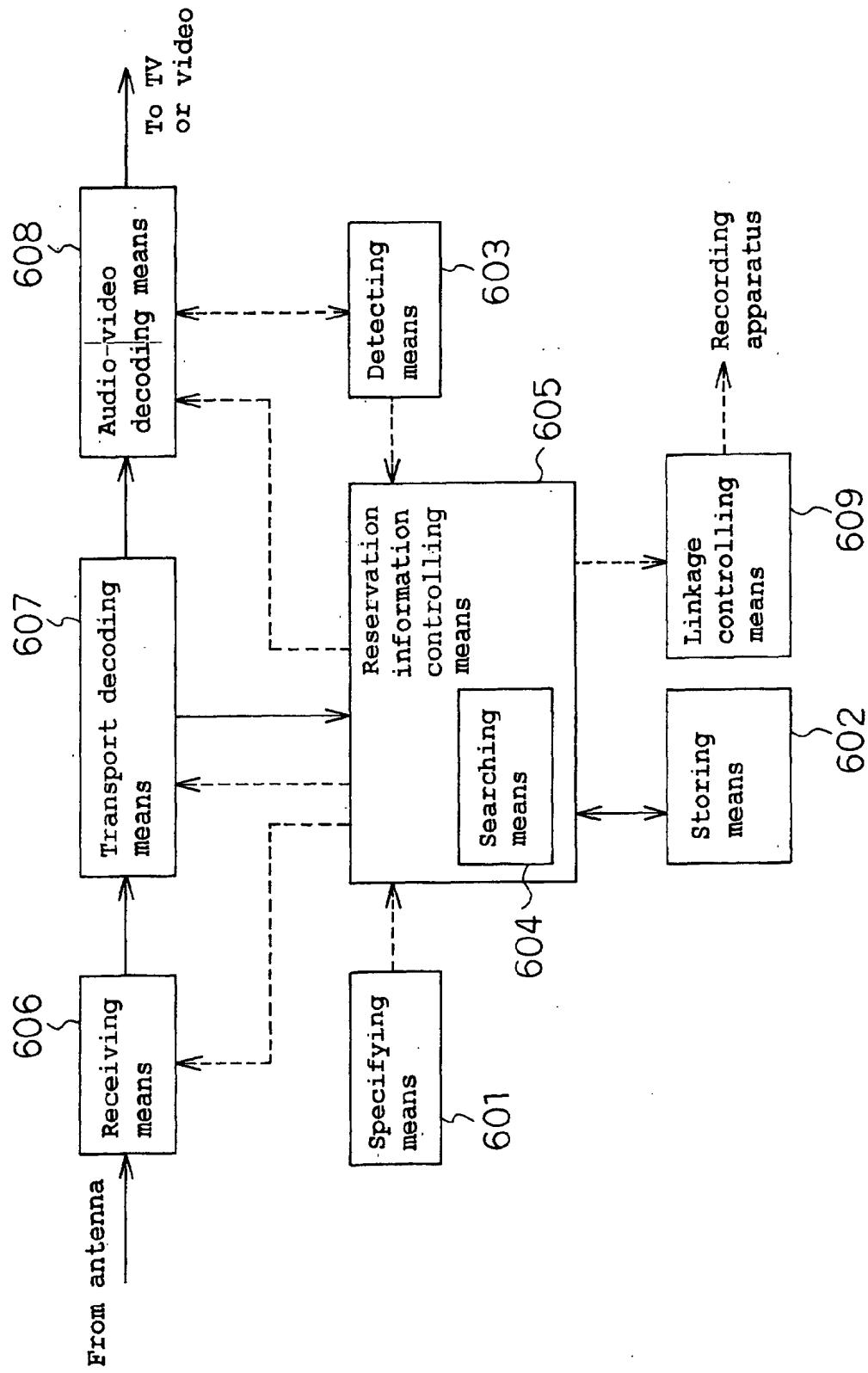
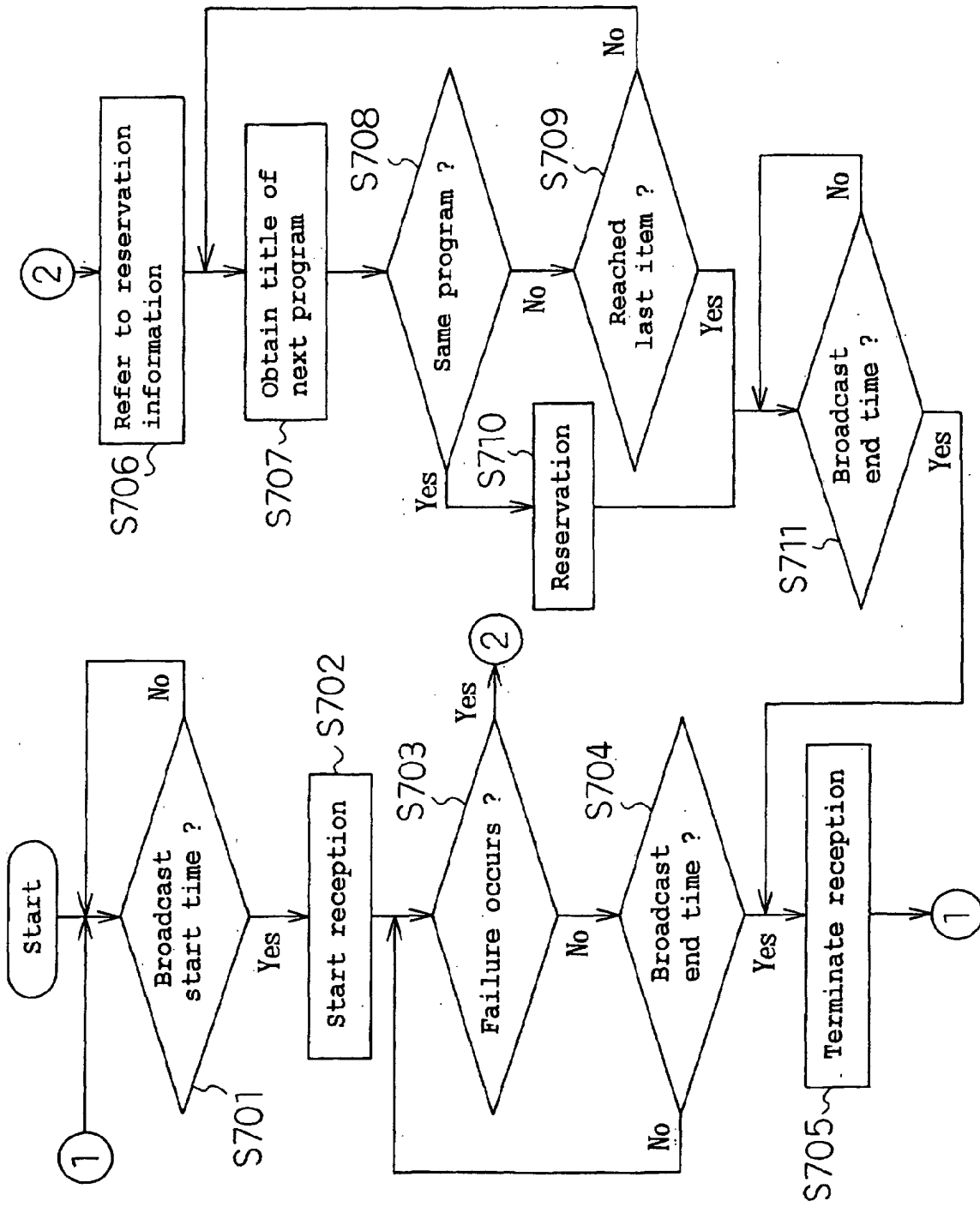


Fig. 7



INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/JP01/03472

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER Int.Cl. ⁷ H04N 5/761, 7/025, G11B15/02				
According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC				
B. FIELDS SEARCHED				
Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols) Int.Cl. ⁷ H04N 5/76 -5/775, 5/782-5/783, 5/91-5/956, 7/025-7/035, G11B15/02				
Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched Jitsuyo Shinan Koho 1922-1996 Toroku Jitsuyo Shinan Koho 1994-2001 Kokai Jitsuyo Shinan Koho 1971-2001 Jitsuyo Shinan Toroku Koho 1996-2001				
Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used) JICST FILE on Science and Technology (JOIS)				
C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT				
Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.		
P,X	JP 2000-312323 A (NEC View Technology), 07 November, 2000 (07.11.00), Full text; Figs. 1 to 5 (Family: none)	1-2, 6-9		
P,X	JP 2000-175113 A (Sanyo Electric Co., Ltd.), 23 June, 2000 (23.06.00), Full text; Figs. 1 to 2 (Family: none)	1-2, 6-9		
Y1	JP 2-12732 U (Sanyo Electric Co., Ltd.), 26 January, 1990 (26.01.90), Full text; Figs. 1 to 6 (Family: none)	1-2, 6-9		
Y2	JP 2000-41211 A (Matsushita Electric Ind. Co., Ltd.), 08 February, 2000 (08.02.00), Full text; Figs. 1 to 14 (Family: none)	1-2, 6-9		
<input type="checkbox"/> Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C. <input type="checkbox"/> See patent family annex.				
<table border="0"> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <p>* Special categories of cited documents:</p> <p>"A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance</p> <p>"E" earlier document but published on or after the international filing date</p> <p>"L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)</p> <p>"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means</p> <p>"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed</p> </td> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <p>"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention</p> <p>"X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone</p> <p>"Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art</p> <p>"&" document member of the same patent family</p> </td> </tr> </table>			<p>* Special categories of cited documents:</p> <p>"A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance</p> <p>"E" earlier document but published on or after the international filing date</p> <p>"L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)</p> <p>"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means</p> <p>"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed</p>	<p>"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention</p> <p>"X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone</p> <p>"Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art</p> <p>"&" document member of the same patent family</p>
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Date of the actual completion of the international search 18 July, 2001 (18.07.01)		Date of mailing of the international search report 31 July, 2001 (31.07.01)		
Name and mailing address of the ISA/ Japanese Patent Office		Authorized officer		
Facsimile No.		Telephone No.		

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